

# John Mayne Church of England Primary School, Biddenden

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118662
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	313035
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Logan

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	128
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Rickwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Melanie Williams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	High Street Biddenden Ashford TN27 8AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01580 291424
<b>Fax number</b>	01580 292535

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This smaller-than-average school serves the village of Biddenden. It shares a site with an independent pre-school and a before- and after-school care facility. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number learn English as an additional language. A small number of pupils are from Gypsy/Roma families. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school has gained the Healthy School, Active Mark and Eco awards. There has been a high level of staff change recently. The headteacher and three of the five class teachers were new to the school in September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

John Mayne Church of England Primary is a satisfactory but improving school. Significant changes in staffing have brought new energy to its work. School leaders have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and recognise that it could improve its current performance further. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has implemented many changes, particularly in deploying new staff to underperforming year groups, although there has been too little time for recent improvements to have their full impact. New subject leaders are developing an understanding of their role, although they are not always sufficiently aware of the strengths and weaknesses of individual subjects. Governors are becoming more effective in challenging the leadership team. More rigorous tracking of pupils' academic progress is providing greater awareness of underperformance. However, teachers do not yet make sufficient use of individual learning targets to raise achievement or to give pupils more understanding of how well they are doing. The school works well with others to promote pupils' progress and well-being. Most parents recognise the school's strengths. As one typically commented, 'We are really pleased with the high standard of teaching and care'. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but with emerging strengths as newer staff settle in. While children continue to make satisfactory progress in Reception, the pace of their learning is accelerating, backed by rigorous assessment and higher expectations. Although standards continue to be broadly average at both Year 2 and Year 6, more rigorous teaching and assessment have arrested the progressive decline in standards at Year 6. Standards in English are now above average and overall achievement is improving. However, the school cannot yet ensure that pupils, particularly the more able, are consistently challenged to achieve their potential.

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The school engages well with the church and with village events. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Most behave well and enjoy coming to school. Whilst the satisfactory curriculum has already undergone some revision, with further developments planned in the Foundation Stage, pupils' engagement is most evident in their support for the excellent extra-curricular provision. Pastoral care is good. The school offers access to full-day care and a breakfast club. There is a strong inclusive ethos. Pupils from a Gypsy/Roma heritage are supported well and make steady progress when they attend with sufficient regularity. The few pupils with English as an additional language make steady progress in acquiring communication skills in English. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been restructured, with new support programmes. The school has satisfactory capacity to build further upon the many recent changes.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Foundation Stage provision has improved in the last term. Children usually enter Reception with skills slightly lower than expected. Last year, children made generally satisfactory progress but a significant number had not achieved all the areas of learning when they joined Year 1, particularly in language. No children were working at a higher level. Current Reception children entered school with strengths in social development, but weaknesses in their knowledge of the world and creative development. They are making more rapid, though still only satisfactory, progress because of more challenging teaching, underpinned by rigorous assessment. The pace of their learning is increasing as the year progresses. A new and effective partnership with the

pre-school is facilitating common approaches to assessment and to the promotion of early literacy and mathematical skills. Children are cared for well. They are confident, show good independence and initiate activities, sustaining concentration well. Relationships are good. The school recognises the shortcomings in the classroom environment and resourcing and that the outdoor space does not enhance children's learning sufficiently. Plans are in place to resolve these issues.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- make more effective use of assessment information to ensure that planned work provides greater challenge, particularly for the more able pupils
- make sure that teachers' marking is closely linked to pupils' targets so that pupils are clear as to how they can improve their work
- build upon current initiatives to ensure that leadership is fully effective at all levels.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Numbers in each year group are relatively low, so that standards can vary from year to year. Pupils usually make satisfactory progress through the school. Although higher in some years, standards in the current Year 2 are broadly average. The proportion of higher attainers is relatively low and there has been some slippage in mathematics against the previous year. In Year 6, more robust teaching, higher expectations and more effective monitoring of progress are contributing to improved achievement this year. The recent decline in standards and achievement has been arrested. Although still broadly average overall, standards have risen significantly in English, particularly writing, where they are above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The very few pupils who do not speak English as a first language make steady progress in acquiring basic skills in spoken English. The percentage of Year 6 pupils achieving the higher levels is now close to the national average, although the school has recognised the need to provide consistent challenge for able pupils across the school.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Close and caring relationships ensure that pupils feel secure and develop positive attitudes to learning. They are confident, friendly and respectful. They behave well, with few recent exclusions. Pupils conduct themselves safely, are well aware of both physical dangers and the less overt risks of, for example, the internet and say that bullying is rare. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. The cohesive community supports social development well, while well-developed church links contribute strongly to good spiritual development. Pupils have a secure awareness of cultural diversity through active links with other countries. Though adversely affected by term-time holidays, attendance is satisfactory. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through the school council and various posts of responsibility. Opportunities to engage with the wider village community are good. Pupils develop sound skills that contribute to their future economic well-being, although there are

too few opportunities to apply their good information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching has a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning. Relationships are good. This leads to a positive response from pupils, who work hard. Teachers create a calm working environment and learning is rarely disturbed. Teaching assistants support the learning of individuals and small groups well. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to engage pupils. Group discussions motivate pupils to think about, and eventually take more responsibility for, their learning. Planning is generally detailed, but work is not always matched to pupils' different needs, especially for more able pupils. As a result, not all achieve as well as they should. Marking is an area for development as it is not linked to pupils' targets. It does not show how pupils can improve their work nor indicate next steps in learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is appropriately focused on raising standards in English, mathematics and science. The Foundation Stage curriculum covers the areas of learning satisfactorily, giving priority to aspects where children have achieved less well. The curriculum for Years 1 and 2 is organised around themes, and the use of literacy skills across other subjects in Years 3 to 6 has been streamlined. However, planned use of pupils' ICT skills in other subjects is limited and the teaching of handwriting has insufficient priority. Support for pupils' personal, social and health education is good, underpinning their good attitudes. Restructured provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that the curriculum focuses on what pupils most need to learn. Excellent provision for extra-curricular and enrichment activities enables pupils, particularly those talented in sport or music, to access high quality opportunities. The academically gifted are less well provided for and this is a current priority. Residential visits enhance pupils' personal development well.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral care is good. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. Adults promote pupils' health, safety and welfare well. The school has good links with external agencies, particularly to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from a traveller background. The deployment of teaching assistants has been developed and is being evaluated for the effect that this good provision has had on pupils' progress. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Whilst tracking systems enable staff to monitor individual progress, individual improvement targets are inconsistently implemented and not all pupils are aware of their targets. Teachers' marking does not explicitly reflect these targets, or pupils' progress towards them. As a result, pupils are seldom aware how they can improve their work, and this affects their achievement.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher and leadership team have a clear vision for improving the school's work. Effective monitoring by senior leaders is ensuring greater consistency of performance. Much has been done, although, in a short time, such actions are only beginning to impact on pupils' achievement. Data analysis and the setting of more challenging targets are being used well to tackle the recent decline in standards and achievement. Governors provide satisfactory challenge and support and are increasingly confident in evaluating the school's performance. Many subject leaders and middle managers are new in role and senior leaders are working effectively to develop their skills. Their impact on standards in their subjects remains inconsistent and leadership at all levels is not yet fully effective. However, effective and accurate self-evaluation demonstrates an incisive understanding of current strengths and weaknesses. The school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of John Mayne CE Primary School, Biddenden TN27 8AL

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You are very interested in meeting visitors and we enjoyed talking to you. We could see that you are very proud of your school and what it provides for the village community. You look after each other very well. Given all the recent changes, we felt that John Mayne CE Primary is a satisfactory, but rapidly improving, school.

- The main things that we found are these:
- you behave well in lessons and work hard
- the teaching is satisfactory and you make steady progress; however, some teachers are really starting to challenge you with harder work and this is helping you to raise your standards at a faster rate
- the school makes sure that you are cared for well, and you understand how important it is to eat healthily and take regular exercise
- the curriculum is satisfactory, but the extra-curricular activities are excellent
- those in charge of the school make sure it runs smoothly at present and know what to do to improve it still further.

We are asking the school to make these changes so that you do even better:

- help you to do even better by using information about how well you are learning to give you tasks where you have to think hard, especially those of you who find work quite easy
- make sure that your targets are clear and that teachers' marking is closely linked to your targets so that you know how you can improve your work
- school leaders, especially those who are fairly new, should continue to gather information about the school and their subjects so that they are really clear about what is needed to make things work well and help you to do even better.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

- George Logan
- Lead Inspector



29 February 2008

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Lead Inspector